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Springfield Republican (published as Springfield Republican.) - June 23, 1866 - page 1
June 23, 1866 | Springfield Republican (published as Springfield Republican.) | Springfield, Massachusetts | Page 1

RAILROAD ENTERPRISES.

The Proposed Connection of Northampton and Williamsburg by Rival Horse and Steam Railroads.

The plans which have been in progress for the past year or two among the business men and capitalists of Northampton and vicinity, for railway connection with Florence, Haydenville and Williamsburg, are likely to be consummated during the present summer. Heretofore an important item in the discussion has been, whether to build a railway for horse or for steam cars, but in the final result of things it is likely that both lines will be built as far as Florence this summer, and that the extension of the New Haven and Northampton railroad will also go through to Williamsburg. It is possible, however, from the greater facility with which the horse railroad can be built, that it may get its whole route into operation before the other is opened to the public. The length of the extension of the New Haven and Northampton railroad company's line from Northampton to Williamsburg is seven and half miles. The present objective point is Skinnerville, on Wright's brook, about half a mile east of Williamsburg, and at a point favorable for divergence to Conway and Shelburne Falls, which lie nearly due north, the latter place 18 miles distant. Plans have been laid, however, since the completion of the surveys to the present terminus, for continuing the line on through the towns of Goshen, Cummington and Savoy, to South Adams, and to effect a junction there with the Troy and Greenfield railroad. The distance is about 35 miles, and the route is pronounced by competent engineers to be fully as feasible as that of the Western railroad between this city and Pittsfield.

The route from Northampton to Williamsburg is of average ease of construction, the only place of particular difficulty being in the vicinity of the village of Leeds, where will be both the steepest grades and the deepest cuts, 45 feet. The whole ascent in the route is 368 feet, and the steepest grade is on entering Leeds, 69 7-10 feet per mile. The whole amount of excavation is computed at 12,000 cubic yards, and there will be no large bridges on the route. The road is now under contract to Willis Phelps & Co. of this city, who will commence operations upon it next week. The estimated expense requisite to complete the track in running order is $225,000; and by the terms of the contract the road will be in operation in September, 1867.

The charter for the extension was secured in 1865, and the surveys were made during the last spring under the direction of the engineer of the railroad company. The track will follow nearly the line of the Connecticut River railroad, after crossing Bridge street, in Northampton, until near the Catholic church, where it will turn quite rapidly to the west and northwest, and run nearly in a straight line to the villages along its route, Florence, Leeds and Haydenville to Williamsburg.

The Northampton and Williamsburg street railway was incorporated by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1865. The capital stock is $300,000 and is mostly owned in New York. The proposed route to Florence, with its branches, is about five miles long, though the main line to that place will be only three and a half miles. A branch will diverge, a short distance from Northampton, pass by Clark's paper mill village to the Bay State works, and is intended eventually to go through to Florence. It is also contemplated to continue the track in Northampton eastward through Main and Bridge streets, as far as the Connecticut River bridge. The road is now under contract to N. C. White of Utica, N. Y., and will be commenced next week, and will probably be open for travel by the first of August. It will be completed as far as Leeds this summer, and the whole project includes an extension to Haydenville and Williamsburg. The Williamsburg people have not taken over kindly to the project, however, and have refused the town credit in aid of the construction of the road, and the company have not as yet secured the right of way through the town.

The station at Northampton will be in the old American House, a few rods from the depot of the Connecticut River railroad, which has been purchased by the company. In Florence, the regular station will be near the manufactory of the Florence sewing machine company. The road will probably furnish transportation for freight as well as passengers, and until the rival railroad gets in operation, will be likely to do a thriving business. The importance of this railway communication to the villages along the route can hardly be over estimated. For a number of years they have maintained a constant and healthy growth in manufactures and industrial pursuits. Florence has one of the most extensive sewing machine manufactories in the country, and the mills at Leeds and Haydenville are doing a large and increasing business. The water power available in this vicinity is excellent, and only needs the advantages of ready communication with the outside world and with markets to be rendered much more productive and available than ever before.

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